

For the next three and one-half years, the surviving men of the *Houston* and *Perth* suffered together through humiliation, degradation, physical and mental torture, starvation and horrible tropical diseases. Only 291 men from the *Houston's* complement of 1008, and 214 of the *Perth's* complement of 681, returned home after the War. This shared history speaks to the American spirit and grit as well as to our enduring alliance with Australia.

Back in Houston, Texas, news of the destruction of the warship hit the city hard. The result was a mass recruiting drive for volunteers to replace the lost crew. On Memorial Day 1942, a crowd of nearly 200,000 witnessed 1,000 "Houston Volunteers" inducted into the Navy. An accompanying bond drive raised over \$85 million, enough to pay for a new cruiser and an aircraft carrier, the USS *San Jacinto*.

According to a 1949 Houston Chronicle article commemorating the event, word of the ship's fate "aroused a fever pitch of patriotism" in the city. "Her loss made the war something more of a personal conflict to more than half a million people," the article reads. "Official news of her destruction . . . slapped the city squarely between the eyes, and set off a series of events that stands unequalled in the nation."

So this week, we pause to remember the brave men of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) who inspired their country and who gave so much to fight tyranny in the Pacific. They who "Still Stand Watch Over Sunda Strait" represent our enduring commitment to liberty. And I thank the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society and the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association and Next Generations for ensuring that the sacrifice and lessons of this greatest generation is remembered and honored.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF LANCASTER, OHIO

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Lancaster, Ohio.

From its founding in 1918 in the parlor of the New Martens Hotel, countless members of our Lancaster community have been called by the Club's motto "Service above Self," to spread goodwill to their neighbors. The impact of this organization throughout the 15th District is immeasurable; like a pebble dropped in a pond, the ripples are far-reaching.

Over the past century, the Lancaster Rotary Club has been involved in numerous initiatives and projects benefitting not only their community, but the furthest corners of the globe. From supporting local students with a scholarship fund that honors the late Dr. Jacob Sims, to fundraising for PolioPlus and supporting the development of Operation Smile, the Lancaster Rotary Club has made the Fairfield

County community and the world a better place.

Today, the Lancaster Rotary Club works to foster cultural understanding and bring people together. Each year, the Rotary hosts and helps to subsidize foreign exchange students who attend Lancaster area high schools, and promotes Group Study Exchanges between international Rotary Districts. I am extremely grateful to all those involved for their continued efforts.

Again, I wish to congratulate President David Uhl and the entire Lancaster Rotary Club upon this historic milestone, and convey my most sincere appreciation for their ability to place "Service above Self."

AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE LETTER TO PRESIDENT TRUMP REGARDING TURKEY'S CONTINUED AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the American Hellenic Institute regarding Turkey's continued dangerous actions in the eastern Mediterranean and broader region that threaten regional security and U.S. interests. As one of the co-chairs of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, I have advocated for the rights of Greece and Cyprus against the intimidating actions of Turkey. Since Turkey's Presidential referendum vote, Erdogan's government continues to ignore and violate long-standing international law and treaties—a threat to regional security and an impediment to regional interests, stability, and prosperity.

As we have done times before, we must continue to condemn these acts of aggression and renew our call for President Erdogan's government to demonstrate to the international community that it is committed to all international laws and agreements. Additionally, the United States and our strategic regional allies must be better prepared to respond quickly and forcefully to transgression of international law from any nation including NATO ally Turkey through targeted sanctions and foreign aid restrictions.

President DONALD J. TRUMP,
President of the United States,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), I write to urge the U.S. government to condemn strongly the acts of Turkish provocation and aggression in the eastern Mediterranean and broader region that have dire implications to U.S. security interests.

During this month alone, Turkey's antagonistic behavior—or "gunboat diplomacy"—in the Aegean Sea against NATO partner Greece, and bellicose threats to EU member Republic of Cyprus' sovereign right to explore for natural gas with its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), were taken to new dangerous heights. In fact, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened Greece,

Cyprus, and international oil and gas companies, warning them not to "step out of line." Furthermore, Turkey's acts of provocation have also been directed at the United States. With regard to the Aegean Sea, a Turkish coastguard vessel collided with a stationary Greek coastguard vessel near the Greek island of Imia, on February 12, 2018. Video footage of the incident has since been released and shows damage to the Greek vessel's stern. In addition, Turkey continues to violate Greece's airspace. According to press reports, 33 Turkish aircraft have violated Greece's airspace during the first twelve days of February 2018. Combined with what transpired on the seas, these are very serious incidents that risk placing lives in harm's way and violate international law.

With regard to Cyprus and implications to the potential for energy security, Turkish warships harassed the surveying vessel of Italian oil company Eni and threatened on February 23, 2018 to sink it in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. According to press reports, Eni's ship was forced to make maneuvers to avoid a collision after the Italian captain's request to the Turkish vessel to change course went unanswered.

The Republic of Cyprus has the sovereign right under international law to explore and exploit its natural resources within its exclusive economic zone. The United States has stated repeatedly it supports Cyprus' sovereign right to explore energy in its offshore areas, most recently by a State Department Spokesperson earlier this month. "The United States recognizes the right of the Republic of Cyprus to develop its resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone," the spokesperson said, adding, "the island's oil and gas resources, like all of its resources, should be equitably shared between both communities in the context of an overall settlement. Furthermore, Turkish aggression in Cyprus' EEZ presents an endangerment to U.S. companies, such as ExxonMobil and Noble Energy, who have been, or will be, working to explore for hydrocarbons in the eastern Mediterranean.

Moreover, Turkey continues to demonstrate it is not a true and dependable U.S. and NATO ally. President Erdogan threatened United States military forces with an "Ottoman slap" if they continued to partner with Syrian Kurds. Turkey's military campaign against the Kurds in Syria places U.S. troops in Manbij at risk of peril at the hands of a NATO partner. Further, Turkey's \$2.5 billion purchase of four divisions of S-400 surface-to-air missiles from Russia has raised concern among NATO partners and potentially subjects Turkey to U.S. sanctions based upon the recently-enacted Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), according to a U.S. administration official.

Mr. President, Turkey is a significant force of instability and a failed U.S. ally. Historically, this has been the case; however, Turkey demonstrated this yet again in the short span of three weeks this month. Turkey's aggressive and provocative actions directed at the United States and U.S. allies, Greece and Cyprus, are overt, egregious and dangerous. I urge the administration to act to uphold the rule of law and to call on Turkey, the provocateur of these tensions, to cease and desist with its aggressive actions that are a threat to peace and stability and are not in the best interests of the United States.

Sincerely,

NICK LARIGAKIS,
President.